Military Planning for a Middle East Stockpiled with Nuclear Weapons

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The media is loaded with coverage of the international crisis over Iran's suspected nuclear weapons program. The 24/7 news cycle is focused on the latest tit-for-tat in the West's ineffective diplomatic effort to get Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment and other suspected nuclear-related activities. Media coverage has also focused on the likelihood of American military action against Iran's nuclear-power infrastructure. However, the media has paid little or no attention to the longer term implications of an Iran armed with nuclear weapons.

It is easy to envision Iran working toward robust capabilities to enrich large quantities of uranium as well as producing stocks of plutonium for nuclear weapons under the guise of civilian electricity production. But the United States is reluctant to threaten or use military force to punish Iran and to disrupt its nuclear program because U.S. international political capital and military capabilities are wearing thin with operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Absent the United States, the Europeans—or the Israelis, for that matter—could not project sufficient military power to do anything more than dent Iran's geographically remote and dispersed nuclear infrastructure. In 10 to 25 years, Iran might be capable of producing large stocks of fissile material, harnessing it into warheads, and marrying the warheads to a large inventory of ballistic missiles capable of reaching most of the Middle East and swaths of southern Europe.

American military commanders and strategists have to squint and try to peer over the horizon to see the longer term security challenges posed by an Iran armed with nuclear weapons. What would the regional fallout be? How would regional states react? What would the impact of these reactions be on regional stability? How would these changes affect American force projection capabilities? How should the United States adapt its posture and forces in the region? We can offer only speculative and tentative answers, but having a sense of the trends and directions is critical to putting the American military on the right footing today to be better prepared to face tough strategic challenges in the coming decades. We cannot turn on a dime in transforming and repositioning the American military to tackle the problems posed by a nuclear-weapons-saturated Middle East, but we could plot a smart course in that direction.

Playing Nuclear Weapons Catch-up

Nuclear detonations, or more likely, regional suspicions that Iran is hiding a nuclear bomb in the basement would, over the long run, probably accelerate already strong security incentives for regional states to follow suit. The major regional states of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Turkey would not want to be vulnerable to coercive Iranian political power derived from a nuclear weapons advantage. These states would want their own nuclear forces to deter Iranian threats and to ensure their national, regional, and international prestige. Moreover, they would not likely have a great deal of confidence in an American nuclear security umbrella as an alternative to their own nuclear deterrents. Riyadh, Cairo, and Istanbul would likely worry that the United States would hesitate to come to their aid in a future military contingency with a nuclear-armed Iran. Their security calculus would be similar to that of France when it acquired its nuclear "force de frappe" during the cold war in Europe.[1]

Saudi Arabia will be engaged in a bitter political competition with Iran for power in the Persian Gulf and would want a nuclear weapons capability to keep pace. Nuclear weapons would also bolster the Saudis' domestic prestige against militant Islamic extremists seeking to oust the royal family, and they would increase the country's political stature as the protectorate of the Sunnis against the regional Shi'a political revival led by Iran.

To support its nuclear weapons capability, Saudi Arabia would likely turn to its security partners in Pakistan and China. The Saudis procured intermediate-range ballistic missiles from the Chinese in the 1980s. These missiles had been previously armed with nuclear warheads in China's nuclear arsenal. The Chinese and Saudis claim that the missiles in Saudi Arabia are armed with conventional warheads, but no one has independently verified these claims. Nevertheless, the Saudis now have an institutional foundation in their military to support missile operations and future purchases of more modern missiles from China or Pakistan. The Saudis and Pakistanis have longstanding, close security ties, and the Saudis have long been suspected of subsidizing Pakistan's nuclear weapons program. It is entirely conceivable that Islamabad might help Riyadh obtain nuclear warheads for ballistic missiles, the ideal deterrent for an Iranian nuclear weapons arsenal.

Turkey too would be uneasy with a nuclear-armed neighbor in Iran and might pursue its own weapons. Ankara would likely fear abandonment by NATO and the United States if it were to have a crisis with a nuclear-armed Iran. The Turkish General Staff painfully remembers that NATO rebuffed Turkey when it asked for NATO protection in the run-up to the 2003 war against Iraq. The Turks, moreover, have a civilian nuclear power infrastructure and the

technological wherewithal to use it as a cover for a military program.

Regional suspicions that Saudi Arabia and Turkey were tilting toward nuclear weapons programs to counterbalance Iran's would send shivers down the spines of military planners and strategists in Iraq and Egypt. In 25 years, Iraq might not be in the chaos it is in today. And, even if Iraq emerges as a stable, democratic, and moderate state, Iraqi strategists would be sorely tempted to resurrect Saddam Hussein's nuclear weapons aspirations if faced with a nuclear-armed Iran.

Iranian nuclear weapons would threaten Egypt too. Cairo has long seen its prestige and power slip in the region, and Iranian nuclear weapons might be the last straw that pushes the Egyptians to drop their diplomatic push for a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Middle East and embark on a quest for nuclear weapons. Egypt might even leverage the weapons for political legitimacy at home and abroad to counterbalance Israeli capabilities and to keep pace with the growing Iranian, Saudi, and Turkish rivalry for power in the region. Like Turkey, Egypt has a civilian nuclear power infrastructure that it could use as cover for a military program. The Egyptians also could turn to the North Koreans, with whom Cairo has long cooperated on ballistic missiles, for nuclear-weapons-related assistance.

Syria also has pressing security needs for nuclear weapons. Regionally isolated and vulnerable to international pressure as well as internal political pressure, the Syrian regime fears Israeli conventional and nuclear weapons capabilities and might calculate that Syrian nuclear weapons would deter both conventional and nuclear Israeli power. The Syrian regime might also calculate that while a clandestine nuclear weapons program would run the risk of provoking an Israeli preemptive attack, in the longer run the risks of not having nuclear weapons would be even greater. Damascus could develop deeper and closer security cooperation with Tehran and receive Iranian technological assistance, fissile materials, and even Iranian missiles armed with nuclear warheads. Tehran might see nuclear weapons transfers to Damascus as a means to put pressure on Israel and distract attention from Iran.[2]

The regional states—Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iraq, Egypt, and Syria—could also look for international shortcuts to nuclear weapons technologies. In the past, large nuclear energy programs were seen as technological prerequisites and necessary political cover for military nuclear weapons programs. However, the history of Libya's cooperation with Pakistan's A. Q. Khan network shows otherwise. That network was providing off-the-shelf uranium enrichment capabilities and nuclear weapons designs. Future networks could set up similar operations to give Middle Eastern states shortcuts to producing nuclear weapons stockpiles that are difficult to detect.

A Regional Nuclear War?

How would the Middle East be affected by numerous states armed with nuclear weapons? The good news is that some international security experts argue that the spread of such weapons would actually stabilize the region. In fact, they argue that international relations would be enhanced if nuclear weapons proliferated slowly, if states had time to become accustomed to them, and if nuclear arsenals were immune from preemptive strikes. They argue that nuclear deterrence is easy to understand and to put into practice: statesmen would realize that the costs of going to war with nuclear weapons would be prohibitive, which would reduce the risk of war between states to nearly zero. To support their argument, these analysts cite the fact that two nuclear-armed states have never waged war against one another.[3]

The bad news is that these experts probably are dead wrong. The theory is appealing, but theory rarely, if ever, conforms to reality. States armed with nuclear weapons in the Middle East might well wage war against one another under a variety of strategic circumstances. Iran might undertake conventional military operations against neighboring states calculating that its nuclear deterrent would prevent a retaliatory American or Arab Gulf state response. Saudi Arabia, in turn, fearing its conventional forces are inferior, could resort to the tactical use of nuclear weapons to blunt Iranian conventional assaults in the Gulf, much as NATO had planned to do against Warsaw Pact forces in cold-war Europe. Egypt had no nuclear weapons in 1973, but this did not stop it from attacking Israeli forces in the Sinai. Along with other Arab states, Egypt could use conventional forces in saber rattling against Israel, and conventional clashes could erupt into a general war. Right now, American forces cannot deter a Syria without nuclear weapons from sponsoring jihadist operations against U.S. forces in Iraq. A Syria armed with a nuclear deterrent might be emboldened to undertake even more aggressive sponsorship of guerrilla war against U.S. and Israeli forces, and this could tip a crisis into open warfare.

Sitting on hair triggers in the narrow geographic confines of the Middle East, states armed with nuclear weapons would be under strong incentives to use them or lose them and to fire nuclear ballistic missiles in a crisis. At the height of a regional crisis, Iran, for example, might launch huge salvos of ballistic missiles armed with nuclear weapons against Israel in order to overwhelm Israeli ballistic missile defenses, decapitate the Israeli civilian and military leadership, and reduce the chances of Israeli nuclear retaliation. During the cold war, the United States and the Soviet Union had about 30 minutes of breathing time from the launch of intercontinental ballistic missiles to their impact. That was 30 potential minutes of precious time to determine whether warnings of launches were real. In the Middle East, there would be only a handful of such warning minutes, and regimes would feel even more vulnerable than the United States and the Soviet Union did during the cold war. Many nation-states in the Middle East resemble city-states more than industrialized nations; they have much less time to hide their leaders from enemy attack and fewer places to hide them.

Nuclear-armed states in the Middle East could also transfer nuclear weapons to terrorist groups. Iran is the top concern on this score. Over the past two decades, Tehran has nurtured Hezbollah with arms, training, logistics, ideological support, and money to enable it to serve as an appendage of Iranian foreign policy. Iranian support helped Hezbollah destroy the U.S. Marine barracks in Lebanon in the early 1980s and kill about 250 Marines.[4] According to a former director of the FBI, senior Iranian

government officials ordered Saudi Hezbollah to bomb Khobar Towers in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, in 1996.[5] The explosion killed 19 U.S. airmen. Iran has used Hezbollah to do its dirty work and maintain "plausible deniability" to reduce the chances of American retaliatory actions. The strategy worked because the United States has yet to retaliate militarily against Iran. Calculating that its nuclear weapons would deter conventional retaliation against it, a nuclear-armed Iran would be emboldened to sponsor even more aggressive and devastating attacks to push American forces out of the Middle East.

A Middle East loaded with states armed with nuclear weapons also would increase the odds of "loose nukes." We worry today—and probably not enough—about Russia losing control of its nuclear weapons, but nuclear worries about Russia today might pale in comparison to those about the Middle East tomorrow.

Saudi Arabia already has a slow-boiling insurgency on its hands with Al-Qaeda, which might someday manage to take over a Saudi nuclear weapons depot. The Saudi regime in the future might have to face a civil war with Iranian- or even Iraqi-inspired Shi'ites in eastern Saudi Arabia. The Saudi royal family could even fall victim to internal power struggles between warring Saudi princes, and control of the Saudi nuclear arsenal might determine the winner.[6] Militant Islamists inside Egypt's military ranks assassinated President Anwar Sadat. Egyptian Islamic extremists might again organize within Egypt's military to take over Egyptian nuclear weapons stocks or to topple the regime itself. The Iranian revolution in 1979 blindsided the United States and converted a security partner into a bitter foe virtually overnight. A similar watershed event could occur in Egypt or Saudi Arabia in the next 25 years. In short, in the Middle East of the future, numerous nuclear weapons stores will sit atop potentially explosive political powder kegs like the one that exists in Pakistan today.

The Risk to U.S. Forces

The United States relies on large airbases to surge air expeditionary power into the Middle East in times of crisis. American airpower is fast to deploy and has the immediate impact of reassuring our partners and deterring our adversaries in the region. For example, when the United States dispatched air forces to Saudi Arabia quickly in the wake of Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, the deployment reassured the Saudis and might have deterred Saddam Hussein from using his ground forces to rush farther south, into Saudi Arabia. American airpower also was essential in providing air defense of the kingdom and protecting the build-up of coalition ground forces there for the campaign to liberate Kuwait in 1991.

Air, sea, and land access points for American force projection into the Middle East would all be vulnerable to the threat or actual use of nuclear weapons. Iran, for example, could threaten to attack Egypt and the well-known major airbases in the Arab Gulf states to deter the United States from surging air expeditionary forces into the region. For land forces deployment, the United States relies on port facilities in eastern Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait. Iran could threaten to attack those ports with nuclear missiles, thereby deterring the United States from landing its ground forces to bolster the defenses of regional security partners.

American military planners might counter that Iran would never threaten to use, or actually use, its nuclear weapons against our forces because the United States would retaliate in kind with devastating consequences. But the Iranians, for their part, might believe that the United States, which takes great pains to minimize civilian casualties in war, would not engage in nuclear retaliation because of the horrendous number of Iranian civilian casualties that would ensue. Additionally, a future American commander-in-chief might make the political judgment that it would be prudent statesmanship to withhold nuclear retaliation in order to reestablish the international taboo against using nuclear weapons. The president might instead order limited conventional retaliation on the regime officials who ordered the nuclear strikes against American forces rather than massive conventional or nuclear assaults on innocent civilians who bear no responsibility for nuclear strikes.

The Iranian regime might judge also that its "brave and courageous" use of nuclear weapons would polish its revolutionary credentials at home and win wide Muslim favor in the Middle East. The regime might also anticipate that nuclear strikes would terrify the American public, which, in turn, would demand that the president immediately withdraw military forces from the Middle East to reduce their vulnerability to more devastating casualties.

Americans were once enamored of the Air Force's "Shock and Awe" strategy, and mistakenly believed that it could, by itself, overwhelm the Nation's adversaries and force them to capitulate politically. Iran and its Arab neighbors might follow suit and come to believe that they could exercise their own versions of "Shock and Awe," whereby early, fast, and concentrated use of nuclear weapons against American forces destroyed those forces, shocked the American body politic, and compelled American public opinion to call for the quick withdrawal of U.S. forces. Many Middle Eastern observers judge that the United States "cut and ran" in Lebanon in the 1980s and in Somalia in the 1990s, and that it is on the verge of doing so again in Iraq because of mounting American casualties. Middle Eastern adversaries might conclude that inflicting casualties on the Americans with nuclear weapons would hasten the complete withdrawal of American power from the region. In reality, such attacks probably would work the other way and spark American public bloodlust against Iran. However, how we see ourselves is not how the Iranian clerics see us or how they read our strategic behavior.

Hedging against Nuclear-Armed Enemies

A Middle East populated with several states armed with nuclear weapons would pose formidable challenges to American force projection capabilities. The United States over the past 25 years has surged forces—largely unfettered by enemy operations—into the Middle East for a variety of military contingencies. However, in the future, a region replete with nuclear weapons could prevent the United States from

deploying forces en masse into the Middle East, especially into the Persian Gulf, in the same way it has in the past. What might American forces do differently to prepare for a Middle East stockpiled with nuclear weapons some 25 years down the road?

American military command centers and headquarters in the Middle East would be weak links and centers of gravity vulnerable to enemy attacks with nuclear missiles. U.S. command centers are in fixed locations, and in an era of off-the-shelf global positioning systems, at readily identifiable coordinates. Enemy nuclear missiles would not have to be very accurate to hit command center and headquarters targets. If the Iranians, for example, were to conclude that the political and military advantages of nuclear weapons strikes outweighed the potential costs, they would likely see the cities of Doha, Qatar, and Manama, Bahrain, as prime targets.

American military planners might reply that their forward headquarters are hardened against attack. But would that hardening stand up to the demands of a real war? The Iranians could use missile barrages to weaken, exhaust, and then overwhelm American land- and sea-based missile defenses around command nodes. If only a handful of nuclear weapons got through, they would probably disrupt U.S. command and control. Even if these hardened facilities survived, imagine the cities of Doha and Manama in radioactive ruin. How long could hardened command-center operations run without food, water, electricity, and sanitation? How would American forces eventually rescue personnel from command centers in a deadly radioactive environment? These questions are too demanding to answer here, but they loom just over the horizon.

To reduce their vulnerability to nuclear weapons, U.S. strategists will have to surge forces into the region in a geographically dispersed fashion. U.S. forces must acquire the capability to project power not from large troop concentrations analogous to "footprints," but from a far greater number of smaller, highly mobile "raindrop" force packages deployed over a wider swath and variety of geography. These raindrop forces would have to be networked and synchronized to move into battle with the speed and intensity of a torrential rainstorm.

The time between the insertion of forces and the kickoff of operations against an adversary would have to be greatly compressed, or better yet, conducted at a rolling start to minimize the enemy's reaction time and to disrupt his command, control, and operations. American forces in a Middle East full of nuclear weapons would not have months to marshal in the desert sands, assemble at lines of departure, and then move out against an adversary as in the 1990-91 Gulf war. Even an air and land campaign like the one against Iraq in 2003, with its rolling start, would have too lengthy and lethargic a deployment timeline and be too heavily concentrated in Kuwait to be a model for a campaign against a nuclear-armed Middle Eastern state. Enemy strategists in the Middle East might take a lesson from Saddam's failure to disrupt coalition military preparations in Saudi Arabia in 1990-91 or in Kuwait in 2003 and resolve that "if the Americans come, hit them hard, hit them fast, and hit them early, and kill a lot of them so American public opinion will pull them back home."

Demand for missile defenses would increase exponentially in a nuclear Middle East. In the states that witnessed missile exchanges first-hand in the Iran-Iraq war and first Gulf war, such demand has always been keener than in the United States and Europe, where many analysts still cling to the cold war logic that missile defenses destabilize because they undermine the logic of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD). MAD theorists argue that states must remain vulnerable to missile attacks in order to be deterred from launching their own attacks. They take this logic a step further and argue that a state with effective missile defenses might attack an adversary because it felt itself safe from retaliation. There is, however, little evidence that regime officials and military planners in the Middle East subscribe to the MAD theory—especially not the Iranian clerics and Revolutionary Guard commanders who would control Iran's nuclear weapons and would likely want robust missile defenses.

Missile defense systems such as the Patriot, which Americans consider tactical, could provide strategic defense for the small Arab Gulf states. They would, however, have to be more densely deployed than they are today, given the grave risks of even one nuclear-tipped missile penetrating defenses. Seaborne missile defenses also would have to be deployed more thickly in the Middle East. Being highly mobile and less vulnerable to enemy missile attack than ground-based defenses, they would have an added advantage; however, naval vessels equipped with missile defenses would have to resupply, refuel, and rest outside the Persian Gulf because the port facilities American forces now use there would be vulnerable to attack.

Given the likely porousness of even densely layered ground- and sea-based missile defenses, the United States will have to devote much more attention to the military means used to destroy missiles and nuclear weapons arsenals on the ground. The U.S. Air Force will have to improve its fixed-wing and unmanned aerial vehicle capabilities substantially to detect missiles, launchers, and nuclear weapons depots. The Air Force's inability to destroy Saddam's missile forces on the ground in 1990-91 showed that it has a long way to go on this score. Moreover, the United States' current inability to accurately gauge the missile orders-of-battle in the Middle East suggests that the United States has not improved its missile detection and target capabilities much since the 2003 Gulf war.

The United States also must redouble efforts to strengthen Special Operations Forces (SOF) capabilities to strike enemy missile forces on the ground and to secure or destroy nuclear weapons stockpiles. SOF units claimed kills of Iraqi missiles on the ground during the Gulf war, but extensive post-war investigations could not confirm these claims.[7] SOF elements should prepare for insertion into nuclear-armed countries in the Middle East in the throes of civil war and insurrection to secure, remove, or destroy nuclear weapons stocks before they fall into the hands of Al-Qaeda and like-minded insurgents. Future Egyptian or Saudi regimes, for example, might successfully acquire nuclear weapons stockpiles only to find themselves

threatened by militant insurgents and crumbling internal security forces. A future American commander-in-chief might want military options to secure or destroy Egyptian or Saudi nuclear inventories lest they fall into hostile hands. The United States today already faces the potential for such a nuclear nightmare in Pakistan, where President Musharraf's regime could one day fall victim to Islamic extremists. Egypt and Saudi Arabia might follow along the same path in 25 years.

Humility and Warfare's Future

The above scenarios and analysis undoubtedly will strike some, if not most, readers as unrealistic. However, if one pauses to reflect on just a brief sketch of military history, several salient points come to the fore that should induce a sense of humility and caution about our ability to foresee the future of warfare clearly.

First, we can seldom predict the outbreak of war with any precision. No one was predicting war six months before Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990, or before NATO began air operations against Serbia over Kosovo in 1999, or in 2006 when Israel launched a major air campaign and ground assault against Hezbollah forces in Lebanon.

Second, we can seldom anticipate the means or nature of combat with any great accuracy before the clash of arms occurs. European general staffs were not thinking about trench warfare before the outbreak of World War I, and the Japanese kamikaze attacks in the Pacific in World War II caught the U.S. Navy by surprise.

Third, we can rarely predict how wars will end or what their consequences for international security will be. None of the major combatants on the eve of World War I, for example, anticipated that their empires would not survive the war. The Kremlin certainly did not expect that its 1979 invasion of Afghanistan would grow to be such an enormous burden that it would contribute to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

To make the point from fresher history, military technological advances have not made American general officers immune to surprises sprung by the enemy in battle. Lieutenant General William Wallace, the commander whose corps spearheaded the ground invasion that captured Baghdad in 2003, remarked of the Iraqi insurgent attacks in southern Iraq that slowed his advance, "The enemy we're fighting is a bit different than the one we war-gamed against, because of those paramilitary forces."[8] More recently, General James Jones, the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, said of NATO operations in southern Afghanistan, "We should recognize we are a little bit surprised at the level of intensity, and that the opposition in some areas is not relying on traditional hit-and-run tactics."[9] These remarks by American general officers should remind their peers, successors, and subordinates that surprise will be the norm, not the exception, in combat. With that rule of thumb in mind, the common, knee-jerk wisdom that future adversaries in the Middle East would "never be so foolish as to use nuclear weapons against the United States" should look more than a little questionable.

On top of our habitual inability to foresee the outbreak, conduct, or consequences of war, we also have a poor track record of understanding the strategic mindsets of our adversaries. The United States gravely misjudged Saddam Hussein when it assumed that his military build-up along the border with Kuwait in July 1990 was to intimidate the Kuwaitis and not to invade Kuwait. Americans still have difficulty understanding Saddam's mindset in the run-up to the 2003 war. Post-war debriefings indicate that Saddam did not understand that the United States was determined to march on Baghdad and oust his regime.[10] Americans dismissed Osama bin Laden's public calls for jihad and the bloodletting of Americans in the late 1990s as empty rhetoric only to discover painfully otherwise in 2001. Many observers now dismiss Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's public rantings against the United States and his call to wipe Israel off the map as mere rhetoric to whip up domestic political support in Iran. However, what if Ahmadinejad means what he says? What appears illogical and irrational from an American perspective might not appear that way to our adversaries, who carry with them profoundly different worldviews, assumptions, prejudices, and ambitions.

These reflections on military history and our necessarily limited knowledge of our adversaries' strategic thoughts should help us see that future scenarios in which nuclear weapons are used against American forces and security partners in the Middle East are not out of the realm of possibility. Such being the case, it would behoove us to begin considering our military options now, while we still have room to maneuver. ***MR***

NOTES

1. The French during the cold war opted to deploy their own nuclear deterrent force—the *Force de Frappe*, or Striking Force—because Paris was uneasy about relying on American nuclear forces under NATO's security umbrella to deter the Soviet Union and to protect French national interests. For an informative examination of the development of French nuclear doctrine, see Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 320-324.

2. For an extensive analysis of Iran's nuclear weapons aspirations and the pressure a nuclear-armed Iran will put on other regional states, especially Saudi Arabia, to move along the nuclear path, see Richard L. Russell, *Weapons Proliferation and War in the Greater Middle East: Strategic Contest* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 71-119.

3. The founder of this school of thought is Kenneth N. Waltz. See his "Nuclear Myths and Political Realities," *American Political Science Review* 84, no. 3 (September 1990). Another advocate is John J. Mearsheimer, who argued that the Ukraine should not have surrendered its nuclear arsenal because it would have had a stabilizing effect on European security. See his "The Case for a Ukrainian Nuclear Deterrent," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (Summer 1993). For a critical analysis of the stabilizing effects of nuclear weapons proliferation, see Russell, 136-150.

4. Richard A. Clarke, *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror* (New York: Free Press, 2004), 40.

5. Louis J. Freeh, "Khobar Towers," *Wall Street Journal*, 23 June 2006.

6. The author is indebted to Saudi expert Simon Henderson for raising this scenario. See his *The New Pillar: Conservative Arab Gulf States and U.S. Strategy*, Policy Paper No. 58 (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2003), 38.

7. Thomas A. Keaney and Eliot Cohen, *Revolution in Warfare? Air Power in the Persian Gulf* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1995), 72-73.

8. Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, "Inside the Command," *New York Times*, 13 March 2006.

9. BBC News, "Afghan Force 'Needs More Troops'," 7 September 2006.

10. Steve Coll, "Hussein Was Sure of Own Survival," *Washington Post*, 3 November 2003.

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MR Classics Revisited

The Centurions, Jean Lartéguy, translated by Xan Fielding, reviewed by Colonel Peter R. Mansoor, Director, U.S. Army/U.S. Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Center, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

A conventional Western army is defeated by Vietnamese insurgents in a brutal, decade-long conflict. The soldiers return home to an indifferent public and reflect on their experiences. Sometime later, the same army is engaged in another guerrilla war—this time against an Arab revolutionary movement—that it is ill-prepared to prosecute. After suffering severe setbacks due to its conventional mindset and tactics, the army eventually adapts to the unique conditions and requirements of counterinsurgency warfare. Certain units excel by changing their organization, tactics, techniques, and procedures to meet the needs of the irregular battlefield. Along the way atrocities are committed, prisoners abused, and ethical dilemmas abound.

No, this is not the story of the U.S. Army as recounted in Thomas E. Ricks' *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq*.[1] It is, rather, the story of the French Army in Vietnam and Algeria in the 1950's as told by Jean Lartéguy in his classic historical novel *The Centurions*.[2]

Lartéguy's heroes are a tough band of French paratroop officers led by an irascible Basque colonel by the name of Pierre Raspéguy. Their story begins in the spring of 1954, at Dien Bien Phu, where the French are defeated in a set-piece, conventional battle by a supposedly third-rate, rag-tag Vietnamese army. Taken prisoner by the Viet Minh, Raspéguy and his paratroopers suffer their own version of a death march hundreds of miles through the jungle to an internment camp, where they undergo months of reeducation under the tutelage of the communist cadre. The lessons they learn, however, have little to do with the economic theories of Karl Marx. Instead, they discover the truths of "modern war." Reflecting on his situation as a prisoner, Captain Jacques de Glatigny, an aristocratic officer, realizes that the previous rules of war have been overturned. "In 1914 cavalry officers used to shave before going into action," he muses. "In modern warfare all those rites were ludicrous; it was not enough to be well-born, smart and clean; first of all you had to win."

The officers embark on a deep, almost mystical journey of self-discovery. The French Army lost in Indochina, they reason, by applying a conventional mindset to an unconventional war. It failed to reorganize itself to fight effectively in the hills and jungle, and instead remained tied to its clunky logistical tail and system of fortified bases. More damaging, it failed to involve the Vietnamese people in their own defense, "corrupting them with modern amenities instead of keeping them wiry and alert with the offer of some valid purpose in life…." Yet what purpose could the French colonialists offer? Independence? Freedom? Revolutionary war is 80-percent political, Mao famously proclaimed. The French officers realized too late that in modern war the people are the prize, and words that can bring them to one's side matter a great deal: politics, propaganda, faith, and reform are more important than aircraft, tanks, and artillery.

Repatriated to France after the Geneva armistice, the officers find themselves strangers in their own homeland. While they were fighting and bleeding in Vietnam, the French people had turned against both them and the war. Old friends, lovers, and family cannot relate to their experiences or understand their changed outlook on life. Stodgy officers who never set foot in Vietnam proclaim an end to the French Army's participation in revolutionary warfare. "The army has finished with 'operations' of that sort," an elderly general remarks to Glatigny. "It must recover its former position, resume its traditions…."

If the French Army was finished with insurgents, however, insurgents were not finished with the French Army. In the end, the bonds of combat and Prison Camp One prove stronger than those of love and genetics. When Raspéguy reunites the group in Paris and tells them he is forming a new unit to fight in Algeria, to a man they sign on to follow him and become the cadre of the 10th Colonial Parachute Regiment.

In Algeria the paratroop brotherhood fashions an elite fighting unit from a misfit group of reservists and recruits, one capable of fighting the Arab guerrillas on their own ground. Raspéguy reorganizes his staff for the requirements of counterinsurgency warfare. He understands the unique needs of this kind of war: "For our sort of war you need shrewd, cunning men who are capable of fighting far from the herd, who are full of initiative too—sort of civilians who can turn their hand to any trade, poachers, and missionaries too, who preach but keep one hand on the butt of their revolvers in case any one interrupts them…or happens to disagree."

If one were to write this passage down as a job description for a counterinsurgent, it would not be far from the mark—although the words might appear a bit strange on an Officer Efficiency Report. Raspéguy comes to the conclusion that France's only hope to win in Algeria, or anywhere else in the struggle against communism, is to build a revolutionary army that can wage revolutionary war.

The 10th Colonial Parachute Regiment's drive to win at all costs, however, leads it down a dark path to moral bankruptcy. When a popular lieutenant and his driver are captured by the insurgents and gruesomely executed, their comrades exact revenge by slaughtering the male inhabitants of a nearby village. Ironically, this massacre works to the paratroopers' advantage. With a French unit in the neighborhood equally ruthless as the insurgents, the population's support for the guerrillas wavers. Good intelligence work, combined with torture of key suspects, leads to the unraveling of the entire insurgent network and,

ultimately, the destruction of the main guerrilla force in the region controlled by Raspéguy's paratroopers.

It is in Algiers, however, where the full extent of the French Army's slide into the ethical abyss is revealed. Ordered to do whatever it takes to secure the city from the urban terrorism that threatens to paralyze it, the paratroopers seize suspects, torture those believed to have critical information, and shatter the terrorist network with a series of lightning raids. A general strike is averted through cold-blooded measures. The French Army wins the battle of Algiers, but loses its soul in the process. What the paratroopers have not discovered is that in modern war it is not enough to win—you must win while maintaining the humanity and ideals that form the basis of modern civilization.

For the U.S. Army and Marine Corps, *The Centurions* is not just a timeless story, but a timely one as well. In Lartéguy's novel one can find many of the principles and paradoxes of counterinsurgency warfare. The primacy of politics, the need to secure the population, the criticality of good intelligence (which can only be obtained by engaging the people), the requirement to adapt conventional units to fight in an unconventional manner—all of these lessons and more can be found in Lartéguy's masterpiece. The novel also explores the dangers of going too far in the quest for victory. The moral dilemmas of the French in Algeria echo only too loudly in Iraq and Afghanistan today. *The Centurions* is a compelling story and a good read, too, one that I highly recommend be included in an officer's program of self-study and professional development.

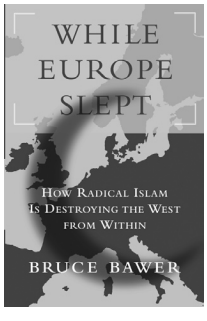
Although the threat of communist revolution has all but ended, the use of insurgent methods is on the rise. Until the West can show itself capable of defeating insurgents, it will continue to be challenged in this manner. Larteguy, in a sense, foretells this when one of Raspéguy's officers, a French-Algerian taken prisoner at Dien Bien Phu, reflects that he may soon be a rebel himself, but on behalf of Islam, not communism. The reflection is meant to foreshadow the looming conflict in Africa, but it speaks to our own predicament 50 years later, in the Middle East. ***MR***

NOTES

1. Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York, Penguin Press, 2006).
2. Jean Lartéguy, *The Centurions*, trans. Xan Fielding (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1961).

Colonel Peter R. Mansoor, U.S. Army, is the Director of the U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He has a B.S. from the U.S. Military Academy, an M.A. and Ph.D. in military history from The Ohio State University, and is a graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and the U.S. Army War College. He has served in a variety of command and staff positions in the United States, Germany, Kuwait, and Iraq, to include command of a brigade combat team in Baghdad during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003-2004.

MR Book Reviews



Featured Review

WHILE EUROPE SLEPT: How Radical Islam is Destroying the West From Within, Bruce Bawer, Doubleday, Westminster, MD, 2006, 237 pages, $23.95.

Some of our European allies have joined the long war against radical Islamic terrorists, but for them the battles are also at home in London, Madrid, and in an ever-growing number of communities. Muslim immigrants have flooded into European ghettos, challenging the continent's tolerant culture and stretching its cradle-to-grave social welfare systems. In his latest book, *While Europe Slept: How Radical Islam Is Destroying The West From Within,* journalist Bruce Bawer presents a riveting account of the clash between a naïvely elitist Europe and a rapidly expanding minority of Islamic fundamentalist immigrants demanding accommodation.

Bawer, a prolific author, provides an American view of Europe's Islamic crisis. He informs, challenges, and entertains with his detailed and well-documented accounts of Islamic confrontation and Europe's too-tolerant cultural response to intolerant Islamists.

Not one to shy away from controversy (he has criticized fundamentalist Christianity and written on behalf of "mainstream" homosexuals), Bawer immersed himself for this project in European culture by learning several languages, working with the European media, interviewing government officials, and experiencing the native's lifestyle in order to provide a behind-the-scenes view of Islam's assault on Europe and the continent's cultural passivity.

Military officers will find *While Europe Slept* a great primer on the ideological challenges posed by a rapidly growing European Islamic immigrant population and its all-too-successful efforts to force post-Christian Europe to tolerate and, more frequently, to embrace, *Sha'ria*. Bawer argues that the Islamic cultural assault on Europe could be replicated in America if the latter were to abandon its long-held foundational values.

Bawer documents the heroic actions of Europe's few "Paul Reveres" who are publicly warning fellow citizens that they will pay a high price if they ignore the rapidly expanding minority of Muslim immigrants who refuse to integrate. One of Bawer's Paul Reveres, the now acclaimed Dutch cultural maverick Wilhemus Fortuyn, author of A*gainst The Islamicization of Our Culture* (book information not available) was murdered, according to his killer, for views that "stigmatized" Islam.

Fortuyn dared to criticize Muslims for their so-called anti-Dutch values. Young Muslim men growing up in Holland, according to Fortuyn, are taught throughout childhood that infidels (non-Muslims) are beneath respect, that Western women are whores, and that the only response to the West's godlessness is the fury of jihad. Fortuyn complained, "I refuse to hear repeatedly that Allah is great, almighty and powerful, and I am a dirty pig."

While Europe Slept juxtaposes Europe's naïve treatment of radical Muslims with its widespread anti-American views to illustrate cultural blindness. Both public views appear to be prompted by liberal media and multicultural elites. But those very same American values that Europeans attack—courage, patriotism, and religious faith—are widely lacking and in part explain why radical Islam is overtaking the continent. European elites do not understand the motivation of deeply held Muslim religious views, nor do they appreciate love of country.

Europe has remained silent about fundamentalist Muslims' unequal treatment of women and their lack of respect for people of other faiths. But the same restraint isn't evident when the topic turns to America. European elites and the average media-believing Europhile see Abu Ghraib as representative of America's presence in Iraq. Guantanamo Bay's jihadist detainee prison has become a cynical caricature for America's role in the War on Terrorism. The 9/11 attacks on America are portrayed suspiciously by a sizable minority as an elaborate conspiracy. Perhaps not surprisingly, nearly one-third of Germans under 30 believe the U.S. set up the attacks.

Bawer warns that America-bashing and uncritical tolerance for Islamic radicalism are symptomatic of a confused culture and are contributing to a possible future populist backlash reminiscent of the rise of fascism in the 1930s. He argues that Europe is at a Weimar moment—the post-World War I era when Germans grew frustrated with social-democratic elites and drifted away to Nazism on the right. As evidence of Europe's possible Weimar slide, he cites the 2005 populist rejection of the European Union's constitution. Three issues fed that rejection: elitist mocking of national pride, a burdensome taxation system that supports inefficient welfare systems, and reckless immigration policies.

According to Bawer, moderate European Muslims should find their voices to fight radicalism within their own communities. They must disavow and discredit radicalism as an extreme expression of Islam while "discover[ing] more liberal ways of understanding their faith."

While Europe Slept offers native solutions for the clash with Islam, such as educating Muslim women, who will influence the next generation. But as Bawer states, Europe's enemy is not Islam, but Europe itself. The continent has a values crisis that could lead either to surrendering to radical Islamists like the proverbial frog that refuses to jump out of the pot of boiling water, or it could give rise to another round of populism that could lead to fascism or worse.

Bawer bemoans the course the emblematic Dutch (read "most Western European countries") have taken as "tragic." He points out that the Dutch have done much to bring Western civilization to "its utmost pinnacle in terms of freedom and the pursuit of happiness," yet they have "turned a blind eye to the very peril that would destroy them." Bawer hopes Europeans will awaken to the tragedy of their course, embrace time-tested American values, and vigorously oppose intolerant Islamic views before the continent becomes ground zero for a future Islamic caliphate or another Lebanon, torn by civil war.

LTC Robert L. Maginnis, Retired, Alexandria, Virginia

Featured Review

BLOOD MONEY: Wasted Billions, Lost Lives, and Corporate Greed in Iraq, T. Christian Miller, Little, Brown and Company, New York, 2006, 293 pages, $24.99.

T. Christian Miller, an investigative reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*, clearly states that he wrote *Blood Money* to ask how the United States could put a man on the moon in 1969, yet cannot make toilets flush in Baghdad in 2006. He examines what happened in the aftermath of the Iraq war, as America attempted to stabilize and rebuild a country that had been devastated by the initial Gulf War, the decades-long rule of a tyrant, and a dozen years of U.N.-imposed sanctions. What he finds are multiple major mistakes that have helped foster a corrupt, anything-goes environment not at all conducive to building a functional democracy.

Miller presents compelling evidence to support the by-now familiar claim that civilian leaders, military commanders, and planners from the top down gave little thought to the post-combat phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He discusses the disarray caused when the head of the newly created Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance, retired Lieutenant General Jay M. Garner, was replaced within three weeks of his arrival. Miller claims that Garner's successor, U.S. Ambassador Paul Bremer, made two quick decisions that dramatically damaged the reconstruction process: to remove all Ba'athists from public office, and to immediately disband the Iraqi Army.

That Miller's chronicle of Iraq's reconstruction period is generally unbiased comes as a bit of a surprise, given the book's title. One might have expected a relentless attack on Halliburton, for example, yet this is not the case. Miller criticizes Halliburton when its performance is poor (e.g. maximizing Iraqi oil production), but in the end he acknowledges that the company more often than not delivered its promised goods and services.

Blood Money really stands out from other recent critiques of the war with its emphasis on the role contractors play on today's battlefield. Miller notes that contracting work is nothing new; after all, who but Brown and Root (Halliburton) built our airfields and hospitals in Vietnam? These days, however, much more work is being contracted, and some of that work is considered essential to the

war effort. What would happen if that work wasn't done? Soldiers cannot refuse a mission, but contractors can; critical supplies could be held up in transit if individual contractors decided that delivery was too dangerous. Miller provides a thought-provoking discussion of contractors in combat zones, particularly in the area of security. On more than one occasion, contractors (who were authorized to conduct only defensive operations) found themselves engaged in lengthy battles with insurgents. What, then, is a contractor's status on the battlefield? How do their actions as combatants affect a military commander's plans? What happens if they commit a war crime?

Miller makes a compelling point that reconstruction is destined to fail in a country whose environment is as unstable as Iraq's. He cites as a case in point the Parsons Corporation's attempt to build forts along the Iran-Iraq border and several health clinics and hospitals elsewhere in Iraq. One of the world's most prestigious engineering and construction firms, Parsons hasn't performed to its usual high standard. Miller explains that because Parsons was so concerned about its employees' welfare, the company kept many of its workers back in secure areas. It subcontracted most of its work to locals and rarely conducted onsite inspections.

In an effort to show just how problematic our operations in Iraq have become, Miller uses both his opening and closing chapters to discuss the plight of Army Colonel Ted Westhusing, a philosophy professor at West Point who had enthusiastically deployed in January 2005 to train Iraqi security forces. Westhusing apparently committed suicide in June of the same year, disillusioned with what he had seen and fearful that his own reputation would be blackened. This is a heart-rending narrative, one that captures a dramatic change in personality occasioned by Westhusing's struggle with people he described as greedy contractors, senior officers interested only in themselves, and Iraqis unworthy of trust. Miller, however, does not seem to have captured all of the story. He quotes from Westhusing's suicide note, but does not answer the accusations made in the note; instead, he merely observes that the Army's investigation revealed no significant issues with the organization's command climate, and he does nothing with Westhusing's observation about untrustworthy Iraqis. The book's two most powerful chapters, the first and the last, seem to leave more questions unanswered than answered, especially when Miller hints that Westhusing might have been killed by contractors who feared that he would report their misconduct. One of the Army's leading ethicists apparently committed suicide and left a note saying "[I] came to serve honorably and feel dishonored." Miller should offer more here.

In the end, *Blood Money* is very much worth reading, though at times it is a bit of a challenge. Wading through its detailed narrative of the behind-the-scenes fight to secure a cell-phone contract for the Iraqi police, or reading about oil pipeline failures and other infrastructure problems, may not excite everyone. Still, it is important for one to appreciate the problems caused when massive money—some $30 billion—is handed out with minimal oversight. Miller concludes with the observation that this war has turned into a corporate affair, where companies battle for contracts and life-and-death decisions are based on the bottom line.

LTC James E. Varner, USA, Retired, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

Featured Review

FOR PROPHET AND TSAR: ISLAM AND EMPIRE IN RUSSIA AND CENTRAL ASIA, Robert D. Crews, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2006, 463 pages, $29.95.

Stanford historian Robert D. Crews examines the relationship between the Russian empire and its Muslim constituents from the reign of Catherine the Great to the Revolution of 1917. In particular, Crews advances two intertwined propositions. The first is that administering the population by dividing it into communities of faith, a governing strategy referred to as "confessionalization" that Crews attributes to Catherine, did much to maintain calm and order within the empire. Second, he asserts that this approach "allowed the state to govern with less violence and with a greater degree of consensus than historians have previously imagined." In effect, the author contends that a kind of symbiosis evolved between the state and Islam.

Crews develops these assertions over a daunting historical expanse of time (two centuries) and territory (the Caucasus to Central Asia). Basing his extensive research on court, police, and other official records, he effectively dispels perceptions that the state was simply an instrument for the repression of Islamic cultures or that those cultures, in turn, were seething with animosity toward the Russian Empire. By implication, a "clash of civilizations" was neither a permanent nor inevitable feature of Russo-Muslim relations. Rather, the Tsar's regime sought to forge a relationship that in significant ways paralleled the one it enjoyed with the Orthodox Church.

In constructing this relationship, the state found opportunity in the demographic diversity and dispersal of the Islamic communities it encountered. Because Islam in Russia and Central Asia did not have an elaborately developed hierarchical organization for managing the populace, the state stepped in to help establish one. A sterling example was the Orenburg Ecclesiastical Assembly, which was roughly analogous to the Orthodox Holy Synod, whose membership was approved by the state. Established by Peter the Great, the Holy Synod became an ideological pillar of the regime, binding spiritual authority to temporal in the person of the Tsar in a manner that accorded nicely with emerging Enlightenment political theory in the West. In turn, the assembly regulated Muslim affairs in a manner that was at least tolerable both to the Tsar and the community of faith it served. In the resultant concordance, the call of Muslims to worship in the empire normally in-

cluded a prayer for the preservation of the Romanov dynasty. The Islamic hierarchy benefited substantially, as state support afforded government-approved senior clerics a level of legally enforceable authority they had not previously possessed.

Ultimately, one of Crews' key findings is his rejection of the traditional explanation of Russian historians that imperial arrangements in the administration of its Muslim population were in large measure a reflection of "undergovernment," a simple lack of administrative reach into distant portions of the empire that in turn necessitated limited reliance on native institutions. On the contrary, Crews contends that new forms of societal interactions in Muslim areas were in reality a product of governmental influence. The state sanctioned an official clerical estate and in exchange shaped interpretations of the *shar'ia* to its occasional advantage. The author documents this assertion throughout the book, noting innumerable instances in which Muslims appealed to state authority to resolve disputes.

Although persuasive, this line of reasoning does not fully sustain the author's intent to discredit the thesis of "undergovernment." The effective, as opposed to theoretical, power of the state was in fact extremely limited, if only by virtue of the treasury's inability to cover the cost of maintaining the requisite network of bureaucratic offices and civil servants. An equally valid indication of the true state of assimilation into the imperial system was the status of most Muslims in regard to military service. Even the Bashkirs and Crimean Tatars, Muslim peoples long subject to Russian authority, were exempted from a new law on universal conscription in 1874. In general, St. Petersburg regarded its Muslim subjects warily, while the Muslims acceded to the legitimacy of Tsarist rule only within implicit limits. Russia's disastrous attempt to conscript Central Asians in 1916, even for military service in noncombatant capacities, was a vivid instance of the state's attempting to exceed those limits.

In fact, Crews' demonstration of a certain symbiotic arrangement between government and Islam is not incompatible with the older thesis of a weak state presence in the borderlands. Indeed, Crews' own observation that reliance on Islam was crucial to imperial administration can easily be construed as indicative of the precarious foundation of the Tsar's authority. To be sure, the carefully nurtured relationship with Islam afforded the government two considerable advantages. It certainly mitigated the threat of native hostility to Russian rule based on a popular sense of religious persecution. For example, the affirmation by many indigenous clerics that the empire enjoyed status as *dar al-Islam* (a House of Islam) was of inestimable value. Then, too, official support for a cooperative domestic spiritual authority constrained the influence of potentially troublesome foreign Muslims within Russia's borders.

Overall, this is a fine work that sheds valuable new light on the processes of empire and the management of cross-cultural governmental relationships. In this sense especially, Crews' research has considerable contemporary relevance.

Robert Baumann, Ph.D.,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

ENDURING THE FREEDOM: A Rogue Historian in Afghanistan, Sean M. Maloney, Potomac Books, Washington, DC, 2005, 336 pages, $27.50.

There have been several books published recently about the current events in Afghanistan. Most are by journalists, who often do a good job with surface reporting but lack the background to do in-depth analysis. Many journalists, for example, have never spent a day in uniform, so they do not really understand the military; nor do they typically have post-graduate degrees in history, anthropology, archaeology, or regional studies, so they do not understand the region. Sean Maloney is a former Canadian Army combat arms officer who teaches in the Canadian Royal Military College War Studies Programme and is the strategic studies adviser to the Canadian Defence Academy.

In Afghanistan, Maloney spent time with Canadian, Dutch, German, Irish, Romanian, and other International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) members, went on operations with the 82d Airborne Division, and met with prominent and ordinary Afghans. He provides a military historian's perspective of Afghanistan's history from before 9/11 through his first visit in 2003.

Enduring the Freedom is a history, a travelogue, a look inside the mysterious ISAF, a positive Canadian view of the U.S. military, and a hoot to read. Maloney is a serious, yet irreverent, historian who gathers his data from the war zone, not the dusty tome. Blunt, uncompromising, and a brilliant analyst without a speck of political correctness about him, he covers the good and the bad with a measured sense of proportionality.

Maloney has provided a good look at the ISAF mission through 2003 and at the changing U.S. mission as Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) began pushing out from the airfields and into the countryside. Not surprisingly, the book is stronger when it discusses ISAF and OEF than it is when discussing the Afghan perspective. That said, I have no real qualms about recommending *Enduring the Freedom* to historians and military professionals alike.

LTC Lester W. Grau, USA, Retired, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

WAR AND THE ENGINEERS: The Primacy of Politics over Technology, Keir Lieber, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 2005, 226 pages, $39.95.

The title of Keir Lieber's latest book could have been more appropriate: *War and the Engineers* is really not a book about war or about engineers; it is about the latest scholarship on the offense-defense theory in political science. This quibble aside, Lieber's study breaks new ground by openly criticizing and eventually refuting the theory.

The book's introduction outlines the foundations of current offense-defense theory. Broadly, the theory holds that war and peace depend on technology and perceived power. If a country has offensive capabilities, it will attack and expand, overthrowing the status quo. When

defense predominates (ideologically, technologically, or otherwise), cooperation and peace are more likely. In subsequent chapters, Lieber considers both military and political outcomes to discredit the theory. By analyzing offense-defense using its own vocabulary and definitions, Lieber deconstructs it persuasively. He uses two case studies of offensive mobility (trains in the wars of German unification and tanks in WWI), and two case studies of the evolution of defensive firepower (small arms in WWI and the nuclear revolution), to turn the theory against itself. Lieber argues effectively that neither offensive nor defensive capabilities pushed or prevented war in the time periods he examines.

The book's conclusion offers an overview of the theory and Lieber's argument, and it presents an alternative argument, "technological opportunism," which provides just enough information for readers to look forward to Lieber's next project.

War and the Engineers is the latest contribution to the ongoing debate in political science circles about war's causes. It is well-written, well-argued, and concise, and its extensive bibliography provides a wealth of information on the field. Historians, political scientists, officers, and analysts, all of whom should be familiar with offense-defense theory, should read this book. I give it my highest recommendation.

S. Mike Pavelec, Ph.D., Hawaii Pacific University

BETWEEN LEGITIMACY AND VIOLENCE: A History of Colombia, 1875-2002, Marco Palacios, Duke University Press, Durham, NC, 2006, 299 pages, $22.95.

Marco Palacios' *Between Legitimacy and Violence: A History of Colombia, 1875-2002* is an analysis of how social, economic, and political conditions combined to create a hyper-violent outburst that has reverberated like shockwaves through Colombia's history. Palacios, a leading Latin American expert, organizes his work according to relevant historical events instead of the strict chronological sequence usually used in histories of Colombia. This technique allows readers to concentrate on the events, essentially grasping the relevance and impact of each.

The work begins by describing political struggles prevalent in the late 1800s, a period that saw three civil wars, as a contest between federalist radicals and centralist conservatives, both vying for constitutional control. Palacios then illustrates how the Catholic Church's strong influence led to reforms, now known as "the regeneration," which amounted to nothing more than the church regaining its control over society. He also examines the period between 1903 and 1930, years dominated by the struggle between capitalist entrepreneurs and their workers. According to Palacios, Colombia experienced economic growth during this period by opening up to foreign investments and entering the international trade arena.

Palacios then shifts his focus to the period from 1930 to 1944, when conservative power collapsed and the global economic depression set in. This was the precursor to the period of riots and war known as *La Violencia.* Palacios surmises that as the masses gained more rights and privileges, they desired even more, which exacerbated friction between them and the "Plutocratic elites." Palacios' account of this period is by far the most detailed modern work on *La Violencia* to date. He claims that "the political system could not digest the new levels of political participation that Gaitan [the populist chief of the Colombian liberal party] had wrought." The work finishes by focusing on the consequences of the compromise between the two major parties that eventually led to what the author calls "savage capitalism," in which drug lords commonly intervene in presidential elections.

Palacios has packed a huge amount of historical data into this very palatable work. He provides his readers with insight into the root causes of Colombia's violent past and connects those causes to its current instability. *Between Legitimacy and Violence* is an intellectual multi-tool for any military member struggling to understand the complex socioeconomic problems of the contemporary operating environment in Colombia.

MAJ Douglas C. Judice, Monterey, California

THEY JUST DON'T GET IT: How Washington is Still Compromising Your Safety and What You Can Do About It, David Hunt, Crown Publishing Group, Random House, Inc, New York, 2005, 252 pages, $25.95.

David Hunt has written a book about a subject that should make every American reader angry and rightfully so. Unfortunately, his tone, his personal attacks on leaders at every level, and his use of profanity for profanity's sake combine to produce a book that should not have been published in its current form.

Hunt introduces compelling information to support his position that the government is not making much headway in the War on Terrorism mainly because individuals and government agencies simply do not understand the problem. However, by making personal attacks on government officials, Hunt causes the reader to question his objectivity. For example, when he introduces Sandy Berger, the former National Security Advisor, Hunt refers to him as Sandy "I Ain't-Going-to-No-Stinking-Vietnam" Berger. What does not going to Vietnam have to do with Berger's ability to perform his duties?

If the reader is willing to wade through such ad hominems, this book is full of convincing examples of how commanders, government agencies, and national leaders missed opportunities to snatch or kill terrorist leaders. For example, Hunt shows how we wasted actionable intelligence by allowing Al-Qaeda operatives to escape two weeks into the invasion of Afghanistan. He cites the case of Osama bin Laden's deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, who was spotted in a convoy and then tracked for three hours by a CIA-owned, U.S. Air Force-operated, Central Command-controlled Predator unmanned aerial vehicle. Both the CIA and the Air Force had eyes on target, but final clearance had to come from Central Command Headquarters in Tampa, Florida. After

considerable deliberation, Central Command scrapped the mission because of concerns that Zawahiri's family members or other non-terrorists might also be in the convoy. While concerns about collateral damage can and always should be taken into account, Hunt argues that they should not be allowed to thwart an opportunity to take out the number two person in Al-Qaeda.

Hunt is a patriot who is attempting to motivate people to demand substantive change. He chronicles how the government wasted time and money on a series of reorganization efforts that have yet to cause any real improvement in effectiveness—a fact that ought to make any American taxpayer mad. Unfortunately, through his frustration, Hunt has produced a book that is hard to recommend in its current form.

LTC John C. Barbee, USA, Retired, Fort, Leavenworth, Kansas

UNRAVELING VIETNAM: How American Arms and Diplomacy Failed in Southeast Asia, William R. Haycraft, McFarland and Co, Jefferson, NC, 2006, 263 pages, $35.00.

Unraveling Vietnam is a revisionist work that attempts to refute the idea that the war was a result of flawed foreign policy. William R. Haycraft argues that the war was necessary and would have been winnable under better circumstances and with better leadership. His purpose is to provide comprehensive coverage of the period from 1946 to 1975, and to challenge the orthodox position that the Vietnamese Communists were nationalists fighting to unify Vietnam while the United States immorally supported a separatist South Vietnam.

As a basis for refuting the view that the Viet Cong were nationalists, Haycraft presents a plausible version of what the enemy might have been thinking. He uses the Democratic Republic of Vietnam's Resolution 15, which placed the highest priority on achieving unification by revolutionary war in the South, as evidence of the Communist North's control of the Viet Cong. This connection, however, is more implied than proven.

Although Haycraft tries to put both sides' actions into context, he periodically misses the mark. For example, when addressing Pham Van Dong's four points for negotiation, he makes no reference to President Lyndon Johnson's complementary speech at Johns Hopkins University. Haycraft also states that during Tet there were "some PAVN [Peoples Army of Vietnam] attacks around the DMZ [demilitarized zone]," but he does not discuss Khe Sanh. Johnson's speech and Khe Sanh are covered later, but by then we have lost their connections to other events.

Another weakness of the book is its coverage of the subject of diplomacy, which is ironic considering its subtitle. Haycraft provides only limited discussion of U.S. efforts to get the South Vietnamese Government to change its policies on such issues as land reform. Nor is there much discussion of U.S. national strategy, which Haycraft should have cited to connect diplomacy to the use of military power. The book does, however, underscore U.S. failures to understand the enemy and the type of war the Nation was fighting—failures that kept the United States from developing a viable political and military strategy.

Despite its flaws and the fact that its conclusions lack solid cause-and-effect relationships, Haycraft's book ultimately succeeds in calling into question much of the orthodox positions. *Unraveling Vietnam* does not broach much new information, but it is well-written and provides a good overview of the war. In short, this is a good work for the undergraduate and general reader, as well as those who want to gain an appreciation of the myriad issues involved in Vietnam.

LTC Paul B. Gardner, USA, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

BATAAN: A Survivor's Story, Lieutenant Gene Boyt with David L. Burch, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, OK, 2005, 237 pages, $24.95.

First-person accounts such as this are gems in a genre often filled with works that are well-researched, but that lack the emotional depth of a personal memoir. *Bataan: A Survivor's Story* is simply one of the best first-person accounts of the Death March that I have read. Gene Boyt, a survivor who endured the march and three ensuing years of captivity, tells his story in the fireside-chat style that marks the very best of published memoirs.

An engineer lieutenant assigned to the Philippines before the onset of war, Boyt was not a particularly remarkable man. He was a son of the Great Depression, an Oklahoma boy who worked in the Civilian Conservation Corps and earned a college degree through sheer willpower and determination. He was proud to serve his country and yearned for the adventure of an exotic assignment far from the shores of America. His retelling of the days before the war is not overly exciting, but just the kind of story you'd hear on a Friday night at the American Legion or the local VFW post. It's the way he tells his story, so ordinary in so many ways, that captures and holds the reader's attention. By the time he gets around to the events of 7 December 1941, the book is literally impossible to put down. His characters come to life. You can sense the electricity in the air and take in the scents of the Philippine jungle.

There is no self promotion, no grandstanding, and no posturing in *Bataan*. Boyt's story is amusing at times, tragic at others, but always enthralling. He is a simple man telling a story that is anything but simple. To read this book is to step inside the world of Lieutenant Gene Boyt and live the events of the time through his eyes. With the able assistance of David L. Burch, Boyt presents a marvelous account of his experiences in the Pacific Theater during World War II. More than worth its modest price, *Bataan* will make a fantastic addition to any bookshelf.

LTC Steve Leonard, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas